

11 NEW SITES JOIN THE WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES IN 2024

[In July 2024, UNESCO has approved the designation of 11 new biosphere reserves in 11 countries](#), including Belgium and Gambia for the first time and two transboundary biosphere reserves. The other new biosphere reserves are located in Colombia, Dominican Republic, Italy, Mongolia, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovenia and Spain.

With these new biosphere reserves covering a total area of 37 400 km², the World Network of Biosphere Reserves now totals 759 sites in 136 countries.



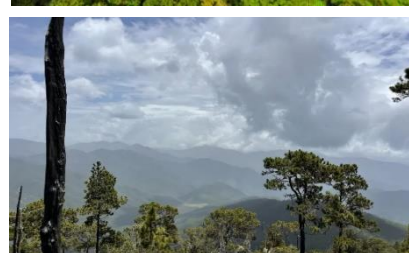
These additions were decided during the 36th session of the International Co-ordinating Council, the governing body of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere programme, which is composed of 34 representatives of UNESCO Member States. The Council held its session in Agadir, Morocco, from 2 to 5 July following the UNESCO Conference on Soils.



Biosphere reserves are an essential component of UNESCO's mandate as the United Nations' organisation for sciences. Each biosphere reserve promotes innovative local sustainable development solutions, protects biodiversity, and addresses climate disruption. They also support local and Indigenous communities through practices such as agro-ecology, water management, and the generation of green income.



Biosphere reserves contribute to helping achieve the targets set by States upon the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in December 2022, which includes designating 30% of the Earth's land and marine surface as protected areas and restoring 30% of the planet's degraded ecosystems by 2030.



The 11 newly designated biosphere reserves in 2024 are:

1. Kempen-Broek Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Belgium, Kingdom of the Netherlands)
2. Darién Norte Chocoano Biosphere Reserve (Colombia)
3. Madre de las Aguas Biosphere Reserve (Dominican Republic)
4. Niimi Biosphere Reserve (Gambia)
5. Colli Euganei Biosphere Reserve (Italy)



6. Julian Alps Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Italy, Slovenia)
7. Khar Us Lake Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia)
8. Apayaos Biosphere Reserve (Philippines)
9. Changnyeong Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Korea)
10. Val d'Aran Biosphere Reserve (Spain)
11. Irati Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

[Biosphere Reserves](#) are areas comprising terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems. Each Reserve promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. Biosphere Reserves are a pillar of UNESCO's mandate as the United Nations sciences agency. They are central to research and awareness-raising work to foster innovative sustainable development practices and support communities' and UNESCO Member States' understanding, valuing and safeguarding of the living environment.

Established by UNESCO in the early 1970s, the Man and the Biosphere MAB Programme is a pioneering initiative at the origin of the notion of sustainable development, aiming to improve relations between people and their natural environment. Biosphere Reserves involve local communities and all interested stakeholders in planning and management. They integrate three main functions: Conservation of biodiversity and cultural diversity; Economic development that is socio-culturally and environmentally sustainable; Logistic support, underpinning development through research, monitoring, education and training.

In 2015, after the establishment of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves have fully committed not only with the achievement of the Goals within Biosphere Reserves, but also to give a meaningful contribution to the global efforts.

In fact, Biosphere Reserves are natural 'learning places for sustainable development' and in their own contexts, they have been implementing projects that address each goal and target of the Agenda 2030 in a creative and innovative way. Covering emblematic natural and semi-natural ecosystems, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves spans over a surface of 6,812,000 km² in 136 countries and there are about 257 million people living in Biosphere Reserves worldwide.

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves promotes North-South and South-South collaboration and represents a tool for international co-operation through sharing knowledge, exchanging experiences, building capacity and promoting best practices. A particular priority of the MAB Programme is to implement [initiatives that involve young people](#), who represent the future of sustainable development strategies into the Biosphere Reserves.

For the communities and actors already engaged in the management of sustainable development local practices in many countries, the UNESCO MAB Programme represents an important opportunity to become part of an international network that can support and enhance their results. The procedure requires an active role of the respective Governments in the proposal of the candidacy to the MAB International Co-ordinating Council. The MAB Programme website presents the process adopted to [designate new territories in the international list of Biosphere Reserves](#).



[The MAB Programme has also made a call for stories, projects and initiatives from Biosphere Reserves](#), hoping these good practices, experiences and lessons learned can inspire other members of the Network, as well as other actors.

To know more

[News in UNESCO website](#)

[Press Release in UN News](#)

[Man and the Biosphere MAB Programme](#)

[EUROMAB 2024 Towards the World Congress of Biosphere Reserves 2025](#)

[MAB Regional and thematic Networks](#)

[World Network of Biosphere Reserves](#)

[Designation for new Biosphere Reserves](#)

[MAB Programme good practices](#)

[MAB Publication 2020 - Our Biosphere our future](#)

[MAB Strategy y el Lima Action Plan \(2016-2025\)](#)

[Building our future: youth entrepreneurs in biosphere reserves in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

[UNESCO Prizes and MAB Awards](#)

